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Official Records

29th plenary meeting
Monday, 22 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 16

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(b) Election of twenty-nine members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Acting President: Pursuant to General Assembly decision 43/406, the Assembly will proceed to the election of twenty-nine members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2001.

The twenty-nine outgoing members are: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, China, the Comoros, Cuba, France, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malawi, Nigeria, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United States of America, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

Those States are eligible for immediate re-election.

I should like to remind members that, after 1 January 2002, the following States will still be members of the Governing Council: the Bahamas, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Suriname, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Therefore, those 29 States are not eligible in this election.

As members know, in accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Regarding candidatures, I have been informed by the Chairmen of the regional groups that for the eight seats from the African States, the eight endorsed candidates are: Chad, the Congo,

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Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, the Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

For the six seats from the Asian States, the six endorsed candidates are: China, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, the Republic of Korea and the Syrian Arab Republic.

For the three seats from the Eastern European States, the three endorsed candidates are: the Czech Republic, Romania and the Russian Federation.

For the Latin American and Caribbean States, the five endorsed candidates for the five seats are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Cuba, Nicaragua and Uruguay.

For the seven seats from the Western European and other States, the seven endorsed candidates are Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Switzerland and the United States of America.

Since the number of candidates endorsed by the African States, the Asian States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, may I take it that the General Assembly decides to elect those candidates as members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2002?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The following 29 States have thus been elected members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2002: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Chad, China, the Congo, Cuba, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Sudan, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

I congratulate the States which have been elected members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 16.

(c) Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/399)

The Acting President: Pursuant to General Assembly decision 42/450 of 17 December 1987, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination upon their nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

The Assembly has before it document A/56/399, which contains the nominations by the Economic and Social Council to fill the vacancies in the Committee that will occur as a result of the expiration on 31 December 2001 of the terms of office of Benin, China, the Comoros, Egypt, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Uruguay.

Those States are eligible for immediate re-election.

I should like to remind members that, after 1 January 2002, the following States will still be members of the Committee: Argentina, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, Cuba, France, Gabon, Germany, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Mauritania, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America and Zimbabwe.

Therefore, those 27 States are not eligible in this election.

I should now like to inform members that the following States have been nominated by the Economic and Social Council. The three African States for three vacancies are Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tunisia. The three Asian States for three vacancies are: China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The one Latin American and Caribbean State for one vacancy is Uruguay.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard,

unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The number of States nominated from among the African States, the Asian States and the Latin American and Caribbean States is equal to the number of seats to be filled in each of those groups.

May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare those States nominated by the Economic and Social Council from among the African States, the Asian States and the Latin American and Caribbean States — namely, China, Ethiopia, Japan, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Tunisia and Uruguay — elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2002?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

We have thus concluded our consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 17

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(h) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/108)

The Acting President: As indicated in document A/56/108, since the terms of office of Algeria, Austria, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Nepal and the United States of America will expire on 31 December 2001, it is necessary for the President of the General Assembly to appoint, during the current session, seven members to fill the resulting vacancies. The members so appointed will serve for a period of three years beginning on 1 January 2002.

After consultations with the Chairmen of the Groups of African States, Asian States, Latin American and Caribbean States and Western European and other States, the President has appointed Austria, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Jordan, Nepal, Tunisia and the United States of America as members of the Committee on Conferences, with effect from 1 January 2002.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of these appointments?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 31

University for Peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/314)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.4)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Costa Rica to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.4.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and my country, Costa Rica, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution on agenda item 31, entitled "University for Peace". This draft resolution appears in document A/56/L.4. I also have the pleasure to state that the following delegations have decided to join the list of sponsors: Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, the Congo, Croatia, Greece, Guyana, India, Paraguay, the Philippines, the Russian Federation and Venezuela.

On 5 December 1980, the General Assembly established the University for Peace as an institution of higher education devoted to training in academic disciplines conducive to peaceful relations between people and nations. It was determined that its main purpose would be the promotion of peace through the dissemination of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The University therefore endeavours to

promote peace and prevent conflicts through the creation of an atmosphere of mutual respect and rejection of violence among all persons.

The founders of the University recognized, with vision, that the first step towards peace is the education of children and youth, since only through education can the excesses of destruction and conflict be replaced by the virtues of peace, tolerance and cooperation. The programmatic basis of the University therefore revolves around the promotion of peace, education, communication, agreement and human rights. Its work seeks to collaborate with the United Nations in the fulfilment of its fundamental aims: the search for peace and security, sustainable development and respect for human rights.

The conceptual framework of action of the University recognizes that peace is threatened by many factors and that it is necessary to confront the deep structural causes of conflicts. It is clear that real sustainable peace can be attained only when decent living conditions for all people are guaranteed, when there is a level of economic development that is adequate to allow them to satisfy their basic needs, when their fundamental rights are respected and when social and political differences are resolved through democratic avenues, dialogue and negotiation. Thus, the University teaches that respect for human dignity and the search for the common good are indispensable requirements for peace.

As the Secretary-General points out in his report, the University is currently going through a period of rehabilitation and reform with a view to fully carrying out its mandate. In this effort, important advances have been made regarding the restructuring of its administration, the development of a broad academic basis and the design of educational, training and research programmes in areas related to peace. We have also expanded its programmes to all regions of the world, thanks to association agreements with other educational institutions in both developed and developing countries.

Further, the University is actively contributing to the implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. It has strengthened its bonds of cooperation with other United Nations organizations, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The draft resolution reviews the University's work over the last two years. Its preamble underscores the various programmes of the University aimed at creating a culture of peace in Central America and the Caribbean in the context of the efforts carried out by the United Nations and the Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace. It indicates the emphasis that the University has placed on the prevention and peaceful solution of conflicts. It recognizes its educational efforts in training for democracy and consensus, as well as respect for techniques for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The draft resolution also emphasizes the symposium on the International Year of Older Persons held in 1999 which recognized the contribution that older persons can make to the promotion of peace, solidarity and tolerance. In the operative part, the draft resolution takes note of the Secretary-General's report and requests him to study the possibility of making use of the University's services in his conflict-resolution and peace-building efforts. Similarly, he is requested to make use of the University in his work in the dissemination and implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace.

The draft resolution invites Member States, intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the University budget and to the Trust Fund for Peace. In addition, Member States are called upon to accede to the International Agreement for the Establishment of the University for Peace, thus demonstrating their support for the institution.

Finally, the draft calls upon States to commemorate One Day of Peace on 1 January 2002, and every year thereafter.

Peace requires firm and continuing commitment. The University for Peace makes that commitment effective through concrete and effective actions in the building of a true culture of peace. For that reason, we trust that this draft resolution will be adopted by the General Assembly without a vote.

The Acting President: Since we have no speakers on this agenda item, the General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.4.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Andorra, Belgium, Cameroon, Cyprus, Ecuador, Gabon, Ireland, Israel, Madagascar, Malawi, Monaco, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Spain, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt A/56/L.4?

Draft resolution A/56/L.4 was adopted (resolution 56/2).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 31?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 28

Culture of peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/349)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.5)

The Acting President: In connection with agenda item 28, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.5.

I give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.5.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): It is with great pleasure that I initiate the discussion on agenda item 28 entitled "Culture of peace".

We have in front of us the report of the Secretary-General on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, which began last year.

I thank the Secretary-General for his useful report. It not only records the achievements of the International Year for the Culture of Peace in 2000, but also provides information on the initiatives that are being taken relating to the launching of the International Decade. Member States, the United Nations, regional organizations and civil society are involved through these efforts in building partnerships to further strengthen the global movement for a culture of peace.

We are rediscovering the values of peace, tolerance, understanding and solidarity in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The international community is faced with a situation where security can no longer be conceptualized in terms of a country's defence and intelligence capability — where peace can no longer be understood as mere absence of war.

Broader concepts are necessary to explain and address the complex reality of the twenty-first century. As a concept, a culture of peace attempts to do just that. In a rapidly and deeply changing world, a culture of peace, to use the Secretary-General's words,

> "provides future generations with values that can help to shape their destiny and enable them to participate actively in constructing a more just, humane, free and prosperous society and a more peaceful world".

It is therefore significant that individuals are taking the message of a culture of peace to heart. Over 74 million women and men have signed Manifesto 2000, which translates the basic principles of a culture of peace into the language and behaviours of everyday life. The growing commitment of individuals to the universal values of peace reflects what the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) constitution strives to achieve — that is, to construct defences of peace in the minds of future generations. This widespread public awareness campaign initiated during the International Year should definitely be continued during the Decade.

The Secretary-General has mentioned that in order to meet the challenge of promoting a culture of peace successfully, it must become a priority for the entire United Nations system. We are happy that admirable initiatives to promote a culture of peace have been taken not only by the designated lead agency, UNESCO, but also by other parts of the United Nations system, most notably the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the University for Peace.

UNESCO has recognized the promotion of a culture of peace as the expression of its fundamental mandate. We encourage UNESCO to continue its important role throughout the Decade, as highlighted in paragraph 32 of the Secretary-General's report.

At the national level, we need more initiatives to promote a culture of peace. We agree with the two main aspects of the strategy, presented in the report of the Secretary-General, for increasing the engagement of Member States: education for a culture of peace that places "children at the centre" and the strengthening of the global movement by stressing partnerships and new information technologies.

A strong civil society involvement would have a positive impact on the global movement. Indeed, several major initiatives involving civil society during the previous year have been very useful, as the Secretary-General mentions in his report. We would encourage civil society to undertake more activities to complement the initiatives of Member States, the United Nations and other global and regional organizations.

As in previous years, this year, too, on behalf of Benin, Chile, El Salvador, Togo and my country, Bangladesh, I am happy to introduce the draft resolution entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010", this year contained in document A/56/L.5. In addition, the following countries have joined the sponsors this morning: Argentina, Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, Gabon, Guyana, India, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The draft aims to build on last year's resolution, resolution 55/47, in carrying forward the work of the Decade. A number of preambular and operative paragraphs have been updated for this purpose, and there are four notable additions in this year's draft.

First, in the preambular section, mention is made of the Millennium Declaration, which calls for the active promotion of a culture of peace.

Secondly, the draft resolution takes note of the report of the Secretary-General, and refers to its paragraph 28, which indicates that each of the 10 years of the Decade will be marked with a different priority theme related to the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Thirdly, in the operative section, the mass media are encouraged to be involved in education for a culture of peace and non-violence, with particular regard to children and young people, including through the planned Culture of Peace News Network (CPNN), as a global network of Internet sites in many languages.

Finally, again in the operative section, there is a welcome for the efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to continue the communication and networking arrangements established during the International Year for providing an instant update of developments related to the observance of the Decade.

We hope that these and other elements contained in the resolution will receive the support of the entire United Nations membership and that the draft can be adopted without a vote.

We would request that the President keep this item open, so that the draft resolution may be adopted with the widest possible support to reflect the global solidarity in promoting a culture of peace.

The Acting President: I should like to inform Members that, in a letter dated 8 October 2001 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Western European and other States Group for the month of October, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the Observer of the Holy See in the debate on agenda item 28, "Culture of peace". Taking into account the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on that request.

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear the Observer of the Holy See in the debate on agenda item 28, "Culture of peace"?

It was so decided.

Mr. Andino Salazar (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express the satisfaction of my delegation at having the opportunity to participate in the consideration of agenda item 28, "Culture of peace". The Government of El Salvador believes that this issue is fundamental to advancing towards the construction of an international environment favouring international peace and security, especially at this moment, when the international community faces an exceptional situation.

I also wish to express the El Salvador delegation's support for, and complete identification with, the intervention on this important item by the representative of Bangladesh. I will accordingly confine my intervention to a few very particular aspects.

The Government of El Salvador views with concern the rapid deterioration of the international situation as a direct consequence of the negative effects of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September. This deterioration is also reflected at the regional and national levels, which demonstrates, in the opinion of El Salvador, the enormous interdependency of all the countries in the world as a result of globalization.

In this respect, it is important to stress that the need to implement the commitments made by our heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration is now urgent and obvious. It is complemented by the purposes, principles and goals set forth in the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, including, in particular, those related to peace, disarmament, security, the eradication of poverty, human rights, democracy and good government.

El Salvador also believes it important to dedicate more efforts to the active promotion of dialogue, tolerance and mutual respect among civilizations and peoples, respect for their beliefs and cultural diversity, as a fundamental base for building a culture of peace and thus to reduce the active and potential conflicts in which we are mired.

In this context, the Government of El Salvador has decided to promote an initiative to celebrate the values, purposes and principles in the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, with a week of a culture of peace, from 11 September to 21 September. This initiative is consistent with and complementary to the content of the main draft resolution on the subject of the International Decade of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, introduced by the representative of Bangladesh, which the delegation of El Salvador is honoured to co-sponsor. A copy of the draft resolution on the week of a culture of peace was distributed to all delegations on Friday, 18 October.

My delegation would therefore be grateful if item 28 on a culture of peace could be kept open so that interested delegations can continue to offer their comments on the draft resolution before us and so that the General Assembly can take a decision on it as soon as possible.

To conclude, allow me to reaffirm the political will and commitment of the Government of El Salvador to continue making the necessary efforts at the regional, national and international levels to ensure that the purposes, principles and objectives established in the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace become an integral part of the activities of our Organization, and in particular of its efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Roshdy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to express our appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, containing details of the engagement of Member States, the United Nations system and civil society during the International Year for the Culture of Peace.

The world has never been in greater need of the culture of peace than it is today. In a rapidly and deeply changing world, a culture of peace provides future generations with values that can help to shape children's destiny and enable them to participate actively in a more just, humane and prosperous society and a more peaceful world in which the march of peace goes on to the benefit of all children.

With respect to the Secretary-General's report, I would like to stress and fully support the reference to the priority placed on education for a culture of peace and non-violence at all levels. We believe that this should be accompanied by teaching children and youth the principles of justice, mutual respect and tolerance of others, regardless of their colour, sex, race or religion.

We in Egypt have always believed that the option of peace is much more difficult and courageous to take than the option of war. We believe that the option of peace is a momentous decision that determines destinies. Peace is a state of mind that requires an honest will and good faith. Without such will and faith, words and commitments are meaningless and cannot be translated into deeds, while peace treaties cannot be implemented and will remain worthless.

A great deal has happened since the establishment of the United Nations 56 years ago. At times, these events have brought the world peace and happiness, while at others they have brought terrible catastrophe. Since the day of the United Nations creation, history and geography have continued to interact and change. History has redrawn the geographical map of the world by adding new countries and erasing others, while geography has rewritten history when border and regional disputes have erupted, new wars have been fought and new lines drawn on the face of Earth. This is testimony to the premise that history draws geography and geography writes history.

Throughout all those changes and fluctuations, only the pursuit of peace, independence, stability and development has remained the ultimate goal of all people. Fate has been merciful to some peoples who have managed to achieve peace and stability, while other peoples still strive to do so and are forced to live under the tyranny of ruthless foreign occupation and wars, at a far remove from the culture of peace and tranquillity.

One case in point is that of the people of Palestine, who have suffered — and I do not say lived — for more than a half century under a brutal occupation that violates their basic human rights in an unprecedented policy of discrimination, displacement and starvation. The suffering of the people of Palestine remains a shameful insult in the civilized world in which we live today.

No community can claim to be an isolated island of democracy in the dark seas of dictatorship while practising oppression, torture and targeted assassinations against unarmed civilians who have committed no crime other than cherishing their inherent rights to self-determination, the establishment of their independent State and a life in peace among other nations.

As long as the Israeli occupation continues in Palestine and as long as the Israeli Government remains committed to its fruitless policy of seeking security through oppression, combating occupation will remain an essential legitimate right of the people of Palestine. Neither they nor any other people can accept living as hostages in their own land, prisoners in their homes, deprived of their basic rights and subject daily to starvation, closures, random destruction and collective punishment.

My country, Egypt, was the first to extend the olive branch and to raise the voice of peace more than a quarter of a century ago and we still hope that, one day, the people and the Government of Israel will be able to heed the voice of reason and conscience. We call on all parties to cooperate faithfully and justly, abandon the agonies and misgivings of the past and look forward to a better future for all. We call upon all parties to have the courage to work hard to establish an environment that is safe for all children, Israeli and Palestinian alike; an environment of peace and reconciliation, not of war and hatred; an environment in which the giggles of children, the chats of the elderly and the sounds of construction — rather than the sounds of war, destruction, war planes and guns and the occupation of cities and the punishment of their inhabitants — would resound. That is the invitation which Egypt extends. Will anyone accept it?

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): The Secretary-General's report on the item under discussion is entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World". This, indeed, is a fitting title, for it so ably encapsulates our common yearning for peace. The children of the world deserve no less than peace, but if they are to live in a world devoid of conflict, insecurity and deprivation, we must bequeath them a world with a culture of peace.

We attach great importance to the International Decade for a Culture of Peace, for we continue to witness newly flaring and some long-standing conflicts, which claim human lives every day. We see young and fragile democracies being threatened by instability and we live through hard-won social and economic gains being eroded on our continent by armed conflict and its many-sided effects.

In this context, the year 2000 — the International Year for the Culture of Peace — witnessed not a consolidation of peace, but a deepening of the economic and social strife of many more people in the world at large. We cannot measure the enhancement of world peace only by how many armed conflicts we resolve; rather, we should do so in terms of how many more children live on more than $1 a day. Only then will the culture of peace permeate human life.

In our view, the Decade for a Culture of Peace should thus reflect a collective commitment by all of us earnestly to uphold the values of freedom, solidarity

and, last but not least, tolerance. We should thus succeed in establishing just and lasting peace all over the world. The eight areas of the Programme of Action for the Decade and their interconnections are important in that regard. Those areas make the critical link between peace and development and should be at the centre of implementation.

We are considering this item a few days after the Secretary-General and the United Nations were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. That recognition should serve as a challenge to us all to fully implement the Programme of Action for the Decade for a Culture of Peace. The millions of signatures collected worldwide are an indication that peace is a common aspiration. The slogan "Peace is in our hands" is a truism, for it is up to us all whether peace will reign or lack of security will prevail. Only the international community, acting collectively, can make world peace a reality.

The Secretary-General's report describes the activities undertaken during the International Year for the Culture of Peace; those activities were inclusive, and we note the involvement of youth. Namibia is among the countries in which case studies on peace-building techniques were undertaken. In addition, the Secretary-General, in his report, proposes a strategy to be followed during the implementation of the purposes of the Decade. My delegation concurs with the proposed strategy. In our view, the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations offered a broad theme which, inter alia, set the basis and the context for the annual themes: sustainable economic and social development; planning of information and knowledge; respect for human rights; and gender equality.

Furthermore, while we agree about the participation of youth as proposed in the Secretary-General's report, it is Namibia's view that one of the remaining five years of the Decade for a Culture of Peace could focus on youth. We strongly believe that the understanding and constant participation and involvement of youth in the Decade's activities are indispensable to its successful realization. After all, they are the youth of today, but the leaders of tomorrow, who must carry forward the culture of peace.

Namibia expresses its thanks and appreciation to the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), the lead agency for the Decade, for fostering a culture of peace in all its fields of competence. Let me emphasize that UNESCO will need financial support from Member States to carry out its important tasks. In that context, it is Namibia's hope that all other agencies will work with UNESCO. Here, the role played by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the area of peace education is commendable. We also support the work of the University for Peace and call for more financial support for its activities. The contribution and support of all United Nations agencies are indispensable for the success of the Decade.

Mr. Angara (Philippines): The Philippine delegation is happy to be participating in this plenary meeting on a culture of peace, particularly since we are celebrating the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

The Philippine delegation is pleased also to extend a word of congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the United Nations on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

This is the first time I have returned to New York since 11 September. New York has always fascinated me. It has now become the city I most admire. While the terrorist attacks were devastating to New York, they also dramatized its noble character and the indomitable spirit of its people. I find it fitting that the General Assembly is assembled today to speak on a culture of peace, nearly six weeks after the attacks and while bombs are falling in Afghanistan. These past few weeks have shown us how vital peace can be and what we must do to preserve it.

The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World reminds us that we are fighting for peace mainly for our children's sake. In every conflict, children are always the first, the most innocent, victims. And that is as true of wars fought with guns and arms as it is of the war on global poverty.

In the Philippines, many of our children have never known peace. Our children wage war each day. It is a silent war they wage: the war on hunger and malnutrition. And it is a war our children are losing. For us in the Philippines, malnutrition continues to be a serious problem, along with iron-deficiency anaemia, iodine deficiency and vitamin-A deficiency. Nearly half of all Filipino children are malnourished. One in three are moderately to severely underweight. The

silent hunger afflicting those children affects their mental development. It also results in an alarmingly high school dropout rate. In my country, nearly four out of 10 students who enrol in first grade do not reach the sixth grade. Each year, seven out of 100 children drop out.

Our children roam the streets day and night, rain or shine, homeless. They rap on car windows and lie prostrate on sidewalks, begging. In the daytime, we find them in mountains of garbage, scavenging for food. At night, we see them selling just about anything on the streets, including their bodies.

If children are the first victims of war, then their innocence is the first casualty. In our villages and small towns, poor children are just as miserable. They carry sacks of rice twice their weight. They fetch water for their families from great distances. Some of them work more than 12 long hours each day, sometimes abused, always underpaid.

Child malnutrition reflects my country's high levels of poverty and underdevelopment. Forty per cent of all Filipinos live below the poverty line. A total of 28 million Filipinos — more than one in three of the nation's population — live on less than 60 United States cents a day.

In my country, there is a strong correlation between poverty, malnutrition and economic underdevelopment, on the one hand, and peace and order, on the other. Through the prism of decades-long communist insurgency and Muslim secessionist movements, we Filipinos have learned that true peace can be attained only through economic well-being and security.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the areas with the highest levels of poverty and malnutrition are also hotbeds of conflict and breeding grounds of unrest in my country. Provinces in the southern Philippines have prevalence rates of malnutrition and poverty higher than the already high national average. In the Muslim autonomous region of Mindanao, 65 percent of the people are poor. In central Mindanao, almost 60 percent are poor. These are the hotbeds of my country's insurgents and terrorist groups.

The children do not know peace because they live in the midst of hostility. Peace is alien to them because they are waging a parallel war against malnutrition and poverty, and they are losing that war. The simple truth is that the transition to a culture of peace and non-violence requires sustainable economic and social development. This is one of the core foundations to promote a culture of peace for our children. Economic underdevelopment — and this includes malnutrition and poverty — remains the missing link towards peace.

The United Nations must address the alarming rates of poverty affecting our children in the developing world if it wants to attain a culture of peace for them. It must forcefully articulate the need to bring about economic development — and proper nutrition for our children — as an essential element towards peace-building. We know that peace-building begins at home, in our own respective countries. We must remain committed to peace through economic development.

To the Philippines, the steps we should take are clear, though difficult to accomplish. We must modernize our agricultural sector, on which our economy is dependent. We must make quality education both accessible and affordable. We must stimulate economic growth through job creation and investment generation. And we must increase the package of social benefits for disadvantaged groups. By taking these measures, we acknowledge that the only true peace that could ever be attained is one founded on economic development and growth.

To conclude, our children have been held hostage by poverty for far too long. We must do right by them. We must free them from this bondage. May all our children know peace in their time.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by extending special thanks to the Secretary-General for drawing up and presenting document A/56/349, which contains an extensive report on the culture of peace. Colombia supports the draft resolution submitted on this issue.

The unanimous decision of the General Assembly to proclaim 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace, and its proclamation of this decade the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, signalled the course that the beginning of this new millennium should take, in which the culture of peace and rejection of violence makes inroads into war and intolerance. More than ever in the history of humanity — which today is beset by innumerable armed conflicts, terrorism, the illicit traffic in drugs and arms, the increasing displacement of populations, poverty and

violence against children and women — the world needs a culture of peace sustained by the values and principles of freedom, justice, order and democracy.

We must therefore have a culture that makes it possible always to have recourse to dialogue and peaceful negotiations to resolve conflicts; a culture that permits us to learn to live together; and a culture based on respect for life and the promotion and practice of non-violence through dialogue, cooperation and education. There is no doubt that progress towards the full flowering of a culture of peace can be achieved only through values, attitudes, behaviour and lifestyles conducive to the promotion of peace among people and nations. By its ability to inculcate principles and values in the minds of men and women of all races, education constitutes a fundamental pillar for the building of a culture of peace on the basis of justice, democracy, equity, equality, solidarity and freedom.

Permit me to remind the Assembly that the first General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), held in 1946, stated that education constitutes a key instrument for building lasting peace. It was through a Colombian initiative, and with the support of UNESCO, that in October 1999 the Organization of American States held a meeting of governmental experts to draw up a programme on education for peace in the western hemisphere, which recognized education as one of the fundamental pillars for promoting peace, preventing conflict, reducing violence and allowing for the development and well-being of our peoples. The implementation of this programme entailed beginning to inculcate the people of our countries with values, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour that would strengthen a political culture of peace and democracy.

In order to achieve the objective of creating a solid and lasting culture of peace, we have to promote an active campaign of education and shaping values — a campaign that entails working out programmes for training teachers and the inclusion of themes concerning peace, human rights, non-violence and values like democracy, civic education and tolerance, among others, in the curricula of all centres of elementary and higher education. Teachers, parents, politicians, journalists, religious groups, those who carry out scientific, philosophical, creative and artistic activities, leading humanitarian and social workers, and non-governmental organizations also play a key role in this campaign of education for peace and promoting a culture of peace. All are called upon to do this work of education for building a world where peace reigns.

To create a culture of peace, a priority task that this Organization must undertake, we must eliminate all forms of discrimination and intolerance; promote the development of human rights and fundamental freedoms; strengthen democratic institutions; guarantee full participation in the development process; eradicate poverty and illiteracy; reduce inequality among and within nations; promote sustainable economic and social development; respect, promote and protect the rights of children; eliminate all forms of racism; promote tolerance and solidarity among civilizations, peoples and cultures; and promote total respect for the right of all peoples to self-determination.

Colombia welcomed the world mobilization of UNESCO during the International Year for the Culture of Peace. The campaign "Let us cultivate peace" yielded innumerable benefits, as did the cooperation given to it by the networks of institutions associated with UNESCO, organizations within the United Nations family and other organizations.

Let this be the occasion to highlight the numerous educational and social activities of my country to make effective the mandate for peace contained in the Charter of the United Nations, and particularly to create a true understanding among Colombians of the subject. Let us mobilize all citizens in order to achieve a mandate to put an end to violence by opting for peace.

Indeed, three years ago, 10 million citizens gave the President of the Republic a clear and precise mandate to seek peace through a political resolution of the internal conflict. In compliance with that mandate, the Government of Colombia has committed itself to a policy of sustained peace, convinced that a negotiated solution to the internal conflict is an essential prerequisite to establishing a solid foundation for peace.

Similarly, in conjunction with the University for Peace, my country's Government has actively joined in the efforts to establish a global training and research centre dedicated to the solution of conflicts. The objective of the centre is to provide a forum for an exchange of experiences in order to develop new initiatives in conflict resolution and the consolidation of peace, as well as to facilitate a continuous interchange between the Governments and civil society

of other countries suffering from prolonged violent conflicts.

In addition, as part of the celebration of the International Year for the Culture of Peace, over 12 million Colombians signed Manifesto 2000, thereby committing themselves to putting into practice in their daily lives the principles of a culture of peace and non-violence. Moreover, a State policy has been drawn up through the "Make Peace" programme, which is headed by the First Lady of Colombia. That policy is aimed at rebuilding the social fabric of families and communities in order to prevent domestic violence and to identify and treat its victims, and thus conforms with the idea that peace begins in the home.

Our dream continues to be the end of violence in Colombia. We want the voices of children to be heard in the peace process; and that their suffering and courage, along with that of all others who suffer from the effects of war, contribute to the building of a country in which the culture of peace reigns supreme.

The essential task of the Organization to promote a culture of peace in all spheres is more pertinent than ever today. The culture of peace provides future generations with values that will help them to determine their destiny and build a more just, humane, free and prosperous society and a more peaceful world.

In closing, I wish to affirm my country's unequivocal commitment to peace. We reiterate the fact that peace means establishing the foundation for a society in which social justice, equality, participation and democracy prevail — a society in which the institution of the family is restored and where the rights and freedoms of citizens are observed.

In order to consolidate peace, therefore, it is necessary to incorporate peace into our own realities and into our behaviour as human beings. As stated in the UNESCO Constitution,

> "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." (*Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, preamble*)

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The supreme ideal of humankind is to build a free and peaceful world in which people can live an independent and cultured life. Humankind has made continuous efforts to build such a humane world, but the world humankind hopes to see still remains a dream. International society continues to witness manifestations of domination — which trample underfoot the ideas and cultures of other countries and violate their sovereignty — as well as the ultranationalism that belittles, and even antagonizes, other nations. The objective of the culture of peace is to create a culture of peaceful coexistence without recourse to violence between or among States, social groups or individuals.

Man is the master of everything and decides everything. All cultures, civilizations and material wealth have been created, and continue to be created, by man. What is important here is the kind of idea and consciousness man possesses. If a man has a peace-loving idea and a fair mind, he will strive and fight for peace and justice; whereas if he has a mentality of hating and rejecting others, he is bound to resort to unjust acts and, even, violence. In this regard, my delegation would like to underline the importance of education in fostering the idea of a culture of peace.

The importance of education in promoting the culture of peace is well illustrated in the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which states that

> "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". (*Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, preamble*)

Proper education guides men to establish correct views of the world and to give full play to their independent ideas and creativity, thus contributing to the building of peace in the countries and regions of the world. In this regard, my delegation would like to draw the Assembly's attention to an emerging attempt to inject ideas based on animosity into the education to children, which is against the noble ideals of humankind.

As is already known, the Japanese Government last May approved new history textbooks for middle school children. These history textbooks can be characterized as distorting and negating the history of several hundreds of years of Japan's aggression and exploitation by beautifying and embellishing it as a history of cooperation and assistance.

The textbooks have developed a theory of a threat emanating from Korea. That theory holds that the Korean peninsula would become the primary base for an attack on Japan once it fell under domination of a country hostile to Japan and Japan would then find it difficult to defend itself. Japan should therefore conquer Korea in order to be comfortable.

With regard to Japan's imperialistic rule over Korea, the textbooks state that the

> "Japanese government thought it necessary for the safety of Japan to annex Korea"

and that

> "after the annexation of Korea, Japan conducted such development projects as setting in place railways and irrigation facilities in colonized Korea".

The textbooks thus distort the history of aggression and exploitation as if it were a "history of development and assistance".

They falsified the Pacific war as if it were a "Great East Asian War" for achieving the "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere", stating that its objective was for

> "economic development and abolition of racial discrimination through cooperation among Asian countries".

The textbooks also turned black into white by mentioning that the defeat of the Allied forces by Japan in the early stages of the war gave

> "courage to the Asian people, who had been under the colonial domination of Europe and the United States for a long time"

and that

> "the southward advance of the Japanese army served as an occasion that accelerated the independence of the Asian countries".

The textbooks also described the Japanese people as having experienced the same pain as had been suffered by the 6 million Koreans forcibly drafted as slaves by the Japanese army. As for the Japanese attempt to eliminate the Korean nation by depriving the Korean people of their language and names, the textbooks watered down the truth by simply stating that Japan

> "demanded that the Korean people give their names in Japanese".

Worse still, they covered up the fact of having forced 200,000 Korean women to become sex slaves and referred to them as "comfort women".

The Japanese authorities continue to defy the demand for full recognition of, and official apology for, their grave crimes against humanity, for punishment of the criminals and for due compensation to the countries and peoples that fell victim.

The distortions found in history textbooks represent an extension of Japan's attempt to avoid making amends for past crimes and is a clear expression of its desire to revive militarism.

Japanese ultra-rightists are trying to introduce into schools history textbooks whose objective is to instil ultra-nationalism and national nihilism in the new generations, in order to realize their old dream of an aggressive "Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere" and to cover up forever the massive crimes against humanity committed by Japan in the past.

If Japanese children are imbued with the idea of militarism through such distorted education, they will once again come to disregard other nations, resort to aggressive actions and thereby undermine peace and security, inflicting tragic sufferings on humankind.

As long as the Japanese authorities do not make amends, through practical steps, for the inhumane crimes they have committed against other Asian peoples in the past, Japan will remain the greatest source of instability in the Asia and Pacific region.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea desires and values peace more highly than any other people, given its past and present experiences.

The Korean nation suffered from Japanese occupation and exploitation for 41 years, followed by the pain of the artificial division of the country by the United States, a division that endures to this day.

My delegation reaffirms that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will address with great resolve any and all challenges to peace in this new century and will fight for lasting peace on the Korean peninsula and in the rest of the world.

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision taken earlier, I now call on the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See): It is indeed appropriate that today the General Assembly is addressing the topic of a culture of peace. The imperfect peace in which our world had been dwelling has suddenly been shattered by violent and senseless attacks against innocent human beings. An initial reaction may come in the form of words of war, and not in the language of peace, understanding and reconciliation. Yet institutions such as the United Nations are entrusted with very serious responsibilities. Indeed, according to Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, one of the purposes of the Organization is

> "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace."

Peace begins within the heart. It is not simply the absence of war, nor is it sought only to avoid widespread conflict. Rather, it helps to direct our reasoning and thus our actions towards the good of all. It becomes a philosophy of action that makes us all responsible for the common good and obliges us to dedicate all our efforts to its cause. If, for these reasons, we are convinced that peace in itself is a good thing, we must build a culture of peace.

Peace is first known and recognized in, and willed and loved from, the heart. Then, in order for a culture of peace to be established, it must be expressed and impressed on humanity, on its philosophy, its sociology, its politics and its traditions.

There are a number of definitions for the word "culture" which my delegation believes provide us with a good starting point for our discussion today. The first speaks of culture as "the art or practice of cultivating", while another defines it as

> "the total pattern of human behaviour and its products embodied in thought, speech, action and artifacts, and dependent upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations through the use of tools, language and systems of abstract thought".

Together, both of these definitions seem to provide a foundation for a clearer understanding of culture, and, when placed into the context of today's discussion, a culture of peace might be seen as

> "that pattern of human behaviour which must be cultivated and transmitted to future generations".

Once we have come to an understanding of what a culture of peace is, we can begin to reflect upon ways in which to communicate that understanding and help it take root in the hearts and minds of humanity.

The establishment of a culture of peace and non-violence will necessitate a new language and new gestures towards peace. In this search, we will not only educate a new generation; we will also educate ourselves about peace and awaken in ourselves firm convictions and a new capacity for taking initiatives in the service of the great cause of peace.

Education for peace and a better understanding and realization of peace can benefit from renewed interest in the everyday examples of simple builders of peace at all levels — those unsung heroes who we know exist all over the world. Our eyes and those of the next generation must be focused on a vision of peace which will nurture the aspiration for peace and non-violence, which is an essential part of every human being.

All of this, of course, is the work that the United Nations and the peoples of the world have been engaged in for many years. This ongoing process, however, is hampered by many obstacles, which continue to hinder progress towards a true and lasting peace for all peoples.

Situations of conflict exist in today's world in which a just solution may have been refused at some time by both parties involved. This fosters feelings of frustration and hatred as well as the desire for revenge, to which all must remain attentive. Those who honour God must be in the front lines of those who fight against all forms of terrorism. As stated by Pope John Paul II when he met with religious leaders on 23 March 2000 in Jerusalem, at an inter-religious meeting at the Notre Dame Pontifical Institute,

> "If it is authentic, devotion to God necessarily involves attention to our fellow human beings. As members of the one human family and as God's beloved children, we have duties towards one another which, as believers, we cannot ignore."

His Holiness touched upon that same idea last January, when he said, in his message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace:

> "We all know how hard it is to settle differences between parties when ancient hatreds and serious problems which admit of no easy solution create an atmosphere of anger and exasperation. But no less dangerous for the future of peace would be the inability to confront intelligently the problems posed by a new social configuration resulting in many countries from accelerated migration and the unprecedented situation of people of different cultures and civilizations living side by side."

Acts of revenge will not cure such hatred. Reprisals, which strike indiscriminately at the innocent, continue the spiral of violence and are illusionary solutions that prevent the moral isolation of terrorists. We must, rather, remove the most obvious elements that spawn the conditions for hatred and violence and that are contrary to any movement towards peace. Poverty, along with other situations of marginalization that engulf the lives of so many of the world's people, including the denial of human dignity, lack of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, social exclusion, intolerable refugee situations, internal and external displacement and physical or psychological oppression, are breeding grounds only waiting to be exploited by terrorists.

Any serious campaign against terrorism also needs to address the social, economic and political conditions that nurture the emergence of terrorism, violence and conflict.

In the midst of this current tragedy and threat to the culture of peace, forms of systematic terrorism should not be forgotten. In some cases it is almost institutionalized, possibly based on systems which utterly destroy the freedom and rights of individuals "guilty" of not bringing their thought into line with the triumphant ideology. Today such people are unable to attract the attention and support of international public opinion, and they must not be forgotten or abandoned.

In this light, the world must recognize that there is hope. Building a culture of peace is not preposterous; nor is it a utopian dream. It is, rather, an attainable reality, which, even though just beyond our realization, is still a worthy and reachable goal.

Pope John Paul II has always used the idea of this search for peace as a major theme. His exhortations have been repeated especially often during the past two years, as part of the celebration of the Great Jubilee of 2000. In a homily during his visit to Jordan, His Holiness called upon all mothers to be builders of a new civilization of love. He said to them,

> "Love your families. Teach them the dignity of all life; teach them the ways of harmony and peace."

More recently, His Holiness told the young people of Kazakhstan:

> "Know that you are called to be the builders of a better world. Be peacemakers, because a society solidly based on peace is a society with a future."

Finally, I would like to conclude with words of Pope John Paul II, spoken almost 20 years ago, which seem so appropriate for our discussion today:

> "I present to you this message on the theme, *Dialogue for peace, a challenge for our time*. I am addressing it to all those who are, on the one hand, people responsible for peace: those who preside over the destiny of peoples, international officials, politicians, diplomats. But I am also addressing the citizens of each country. All are in fact called by the need to prepare true peace, to maintain it or to re-establish it, on solid and just foundations. Now I am deeply convinced that dialogue — true dialogue — is an essential condition for such peace. Yes, this dialogue is necessary, not only opportune. It is difficult, but it is possible, in spite of the obstacles that realism obliges us to consider. It therefore represents a true challenge, which I invite you to take up. And I do this without any other purpose than that of contributing, myself and the Holy See, to peace, by taking very much to heart the destiny of humanity, as the heir of the message of Christ and as the first one responsible for that message, which is above all a message of peace for all men."

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the

second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): It is most unfortunate that the debate on the culture of peace has been used by the representative of Egypt to inject the rhetoric of violence and blind anti-Israeli hatred into this Hall. It is unfortunate, in particular, because Egypt knows better. Egypt knows full well Israel's commitment to peace and its far-reaching compromises, which are responded to by violence and terror. Egypt knows, too, the price paid in Israeli life as a result of a ruthless terrorist campaign, which the representative of Egypt conveniently avoided referring to in his statement.

Indeed, the culture of peace in our region would be greatly advanced if Egypt abandoned its tendency to apportion blame and engage in false accusations, and concentrated more on its own conduct and on encouraging democratization and respect for mutual rights and compromise in its society and among neighbouring peoples and Governments.

Egypt's peace with Israel was indeed a historic and important step for the region as a whole. But a formal peace treaty is only one part of the equation. The culture of peace, as I would hope the representative of Egypt knows, involves much more than that.

Mr. Roshdy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Israeli representative for his concern for democracy in Egyptian society, but what takes place in Egyptian society is an internal matter and is not the business of any delegation just as what takes place in Israeli society is an internal matter. What concerns us here are the violent Israeli policies against the Palestinians. That is not an internal matter.

The Israeli representative speaks about the causes of hatred propagated by Egypt against Israel. But Egypt does not need to promote such calls. Israeli policies are self-evident in that regard, and we leave it to delegations to judge if these policies will lead to peace. The Israeli people will be the first to benefit from peace.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): The Egyptian representative referred to Israel as a democratic State. Israel is indeed a democracy, in a hostile and undemocratic neighbourhood. It continues to uphold democratic standards in the face of relentless violent assault on its very existence. Rather than attacking Israel, the Egyptian representative would be well served by examining his own country's human rights record and its contribution to fostering a culture of peace. The official Egyptian press spews the vilest forms of anti-Semitic lies and anti-Jewish stereotypes. Such anti-Semitic and anti-western propaganda underscores a culture of hatred, not of peace. Peace is as much a psychological and emotional affair as a political one. As a nation that first recognized that Israel, too, has the right to live in peace, Egypt should also lead the way towards reconciling the hearts and minds of its people and the peoples of the region to peace with Israel, rather than stoking the flames of hatred.

Mr. Roshdy (Egypt): I am sorry to prolong a discussion that seems fruitless.

Peace is not an expression of meaningless words, treaties to be signed and retracted the following day, ceremonial pictures to be taken or toasts to be exchanged. Rather, peace is the interpretation and the implementation of honest goodwill, costly sacrifices courageously exchanged and serious commitment to striving for enduring peace. Peace begins deep in our hearts. If our hearts and intentions are in the right place, our deeds will be in the right direction and our actions will be honest and true.

The difference between peace and settlement is as obvious as the difference between remedies and tranquillizers. We cannot promote the culture of peace before the establishment of peace itself. How can we establish peace if not all partners believe genuinely in peace and the need for peace?

I will conclude with a statement that I am sure will come as news to the Israeli representative: Israeli blood is not more precious or purer than Palestinian blood.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that, at the request of the sponsors, action on draft resolution A/56/L.5 will be taken at a later date, to be announced.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to announce some changes to the programme of work of the General Assembly.

First, I should like to inform the members that consideration of agenda item 23, entitled "Building a

peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", originally scheduled for Thursday afternoon, 25 October 2001, is postponed to Friday, 2 November 2001, in the morning.

I should also like to inform members of a matter concerning agenda item 15 (b), on the election of members of the Economic and Social Council, scheduled to take place on Friday, 26 October 2001.

In connection with this sub-item, I should like to draw the attention of members to a latter dated 11 October 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal addressed to the President of the General Assembly. The letter has been circulated as document A/56/467.

In his letter, the Permanent Representative of Portugal announces that Portugal will relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council for the year 2002, in favour of Spain. Consequently, it will be necessary for the Assembly to conduct a by-election to fill that one vacancy, in accordance with rule 140 of its rules of procedure.

In this regard, I should like to inform members that on Friday, 26 October, the General Assembly will first conduct a by-election to fill this one vacancy, and then proceed to the election of 18 members of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.